



Pacific Electric (PE) ROW/West Santa Ana Branch Corridor Alternatives Analysis

Steering Committee Meeting #2

Wednesday, July 21, 2010 1:30 – 3:00 PM

Walter D. Ehlers Community Center-Liberty Hall
8150 Knott Avenue
Buena Park, CA 90260

Meeting Summary

Attendees	Organization
Hon. Art Brown	OCTA
Hon. Diane DuBois	Metro
Hon. Janet Nguyen	Orange County Board of Supervisors, First District
Hon. Scott Larsen	City of Bellflower
Hon. Bruce Barrows	City of Cerritos
Hon. Todd Seymore	City of Cypress
Shannon DeLong	City of Downey
Keith Jones	City of Garden Grove
Hon. John Noguez	City of Huntington Park
Hon. Ralph Rodriguez	City of La Palma
Elias Saikaly	City of Lynwood
Raul Godinez	City of Santa Ana
David Biondolillo	City of Santa Ana
Hon. Maria Davila	City of South Gate
Ron Bates	City of South Gate
Hon. Carol Warren	City of Stanton
Hon. Gil Hurtado	Gateway Cities Council of Governments
Hon. Mark Waldman	Orange County Council of Governments
Philip Law	SCAG
Naresh Amatya	SCAG
Matt Gleason	SCAG
Ernesto Chaves	Metro
John Grace	Metro
Karen Heit	Metro
Kelly Hart	OCTA
Wendy Garcia	OCTA
Marissa Espino	OCTA
Jim McCarthy	Caltrans, District 7
Nancy Michali	AECOM
Yara Jasso	AECOM
Cathy Higley	Cordoba Corp.
Katherine Padilla	Katherine Padilla & Associates

Welcome and Introductions

Co-chairs OCTA Director/Mayor Art Brown and MTA Director/Mayor Diane DuBois opened the meeting and reviewed the following roles of the Steering Committee members: a) to represent their communities, b) to advise the project team, and c) to serve as a sounding board throughout the study process.

The Co-chairs also stated that the purpose of the meeting was to present an overview of project Initiation Efforts and Results, the Purpose and Need Definition, and to seek concurrence on the Proposed Initial Set of Alternatives and Initial Screening Criteria.

Project Initiation Efforts and Results Overview

P. Law presented an overview of project initiation efforts, which included stakeholder and public participation consisting of: a) Individual interviews or small group interviews of members of the Steering Committee and Technical Advisory Committee members; and b) six public meetings that were held in Los Angeles and Orange Counties in June 2010. He summarized the results of the community meetings, and categorized public input by the following factors: "Transportation Challenges," "Possible Solutions," "Evaluation Criteria" (for selecting alternatives), and "Preferred Communication Tools." He explained that community input contributed to the development of screening criteria and the recommendation of the Initial Alternatives that would be presented today.

N. Michali then presented initial *Purpose and Need* findings and an overview of the alternatives analysis screening process. The process entails a narrowing of alternatives, beginning with a conceptual set of alternatives that is then screened, using technical analysis and public input, down to an initial set, which is further screened to a smaller final set, ultimately leading to a recommended strategy or set of strategies. N. Michali described in detail how the characteristics of the Conceptual Alternatives had been presented for feedback in community meetings. She also described how the conceptual screening criteria had been established by reviewing group discussion comments. Additionally, N. Michali discussed the criteria that had been used for conceptual screening, including: community/stakeholder support; serves both community and regional trips; provides fast service; station spacing can support local economic goals; accommodates both peak and non-peak service needs; and is compatible with freight rail operations.

Based on the conceptual screening criteria, the recommended **Initial Set of Alternatives** were as follows: No Build; Transportation Systems Management; Bus Rapid Transit (BRT); Light Rail Transit (LRT); Streetcar; Multiple Unit/Sprinter; and High Speed Rail. N. Michali described the qualities of each Alternative, in terms of capacity, approximate travel speed, number of stations that could be accommodate on the right of way, and then compared them with the criteria. As the PE ROW Corridor is wide enough to accommodate both pedestrian/bike paths and transit system in most cases, she stated that each of the Alternatives would include this community-supported amenity.

She concluded her presentation by stating that the next step in the Alternatives Analysis process would be to assess the Alternatives in greater technical detail including: station spacing, projected ridership, and projected travel speed. This screening would take us down to a smaller *Final Set of Alternatives*, and the screening results will be presented to the Steering Committee in November 2010.

Open Discussion

- D. DuBois asked whether SCAG staff had met with representatives of all the cities. P. Law responded that all cities had been briefed with the exception of one, where staff had been unavailable.
- T. Seymore stated that the City of Cypress does not support rail or any other transit system on the corridor and that the City has put forward the idea of making the PE ROW into a bicycle/ pedestrian path only, but that wasn't presented in the public meetings.
- A committee member asked whether the number of community meeting attendees was reflective of the actual number of people who live along the corridor.
- D. Du Bois and several other committee members suggested that there should be more extensive outreach conducted, expanded notification, and that public meetings should be held at convenient times to ensure greater public participation. It was emphasized that it was important for residents to be involved now, at this early phase in project planning, rather than later when key decisions, such as station locations and modes were decided.
- Another member stated that he had observed in public meetings that speed of travel was a key concern, and that grade separation was strongly desired by community.
- There was a question whether high speed rail included magnetic levitation. N. Michael stated that the study was intended to be mode neutral.
- Cost to operate and cost to build also appeared to be important to community members, according to a steering committee member.
- A member expressed an opinion that the public "needs to know that the intent is to run the line to connect to Union Station and to Santa Ana", and that the scope of the study includes determining how to make those connections.
- In terms of technical analysis, a steering committee member asked when trip generators would be assessed and a member commented that it would be very important to determine station locations. It was suggested that the information about how the Initial Alternatives were selected should be further simplified so that it would be easily understood by all community members.
- There was a discussion about improving outreach and attendance at future community meetings. P. Law stated that at the beginning of the study, the project team met with each city's steering committee representative to discuss the best outreach approach for their communities, and that approach was followed. The project team will continue to improve on the outreach approach for the upcoming community meetings.
- There was a question as to whether a green belt only option would be considered.
- There was a statement that more information about the estimated cost to build different alternatives is needed.
- It was also suggested that city's visions for their future should not be discussed or considered, but instead only actual plans that were on the "drawing board."
- Another member stated that as "elected officials we should be focused on the future, as well as the present, and that there had to be some sense of vision."
- Another member suggested that the future in terms of job and population growth projections along with having a vision should all be considered because as traffic worsens "we will need traffic signals to back out of our driveways. "

- Leadership is needed, suggested one member, and this (partnership between OCTA, Metro, both counties) represents an opportunity to solve a regional problem--congestion.
- D. DuBois stated that the ROW presents an important opportunity to examine the potential for providing a transportation improvement to improve regional mobility.
- It was stated that the system has to grade separated (as much as possible), environmentally-friendly, in terms of pollution, noise and blight, "has to get me there faster than my car and has to go where I want to go."
- A committee member asked whether different vertical alignments would be considered. This was a concern for a City that has invested funds to improve traffic flow through intersections.
- The City of La Palma representative stated that the "money would be better spent on concrete," or "running a system down the middle of a freeway."

Next Steps

P. Law stated that, having the Steering Committee's concurrence on the Initial Set of Alternatives and the initial screening criteria, the project team would move forward with the initial screening and return in the fall with the screening results. It was announced that the next Steering Committee meeting will be held in October 2010.